

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, during the August recess, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of my constituents from all walks of life and hear what was on their mind. The question that came up over and over was are we going to invade Iraq and, if we were, what did that mean? How many troops would it take? Would we have to attack civilian centers? How long would we have to stay in Iraq? Would our allies join us? How much would it cost? Who would rule Iraq after we invaded? How would this affect our efforts in Afghanistan? How would this affect our efforts to promote peace in the Middle East?

I have thought long and hard about this matter as I am sure all of my colleagues have. I believe the questions my constituents have raised are legitimate and require genuine and detailed replies. I also believe that as a Member of this body, I need to know in very specific detail how the United States will find and allocate the necessary resources for such a venture without jeopardizing our current priorities in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Dismantling and destroying the al Qaeda terrorist network and stabilizing and restoring a functioning representative government in Afghanistan are top priorities for U.S. policy.

We are a long way from achieving these goals. Known al Qaeda and Taliban fighters continue to operate in parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Other top al Qaeda leaders are known to be in Iran. Al Qaeda funds have been relocated to Sudan. The task of creating a stable post-conflict government in Afghanistan has barely begun, and warlords are reasserting their hold over former territory. Development aid has been slow to arrive and even slower to take effect, and most is unable to reach very far beyond Kabul.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that it will take years for Afghanistan to become truly stable and able to meet the needs of its own people, but right now the country is already beginning to slip backward. It is imperative that we stay the course and succeed in Afghanistan, and it will cost the United States a great deal in time, personnel, effort, and money.

Completing the mission in Afghanistan requires holding together the international coalition Washington assembled following the September 11 attacks. War in Iraq, especially any unilateral action, would almost certainly shatter that coalition and alienate significant partners. A unilateral U.S. invasion of Iraq will make it difficult to get Arab support for a fair and lasting

resolution to the Middle East conflict. It would also inflame anti-American sentiment in the region. Diplomacy and coalition building aside, the military challenges of war and especially its aftermath in Iraq are still quite formidable. Iraq, like Afghanistan, is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nation with no apparent popularly supported opposition. Armed paramilitary and clandestine organizations opposed to a U.S.-led occupation of Iraq are likely to engage in guerrilla attacks against American soldiers. Internal strife and even civil and ethnic war are even more likely. Experts on Iraq from both prior Republican and Democrat administrations have indicated that it could take a decade or more of U.S. troops occupying Iraq before it is stable once more.

I will listen closely to the speech that President Bush will deliver next week at the United Nations. I welcome the fact that the administration has decided to reach out to our allies and to work with the United Nations on this matter. The President has also made the right decision to come before Congress and seek specific authorization for any military action in Iraq. Many questions remain to be answered before deciding how best to prevent the regime of Saddam Hussein from developing or deploying offensive weapons against other nations.

In the meantime the U.S. and the international community must continue to put maximum pressure on the Iraqi regime and press for resumption of unconditional international weapons inspections. The President should continue to work through the United Nations Security Council, and the U.S. should exercise restraint and continue to build an international coalition, including Arab nations, dedicated to completing the job in Afghanistan and willing to work jointly for more genuinely representative government in Baghdad.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion let me just say that I am deeply concerned with the policy that the administration has articulated thus far on Iraq. It will take a far more compelling presentation to convince me and many of my constituents that war is the right and only course remaining for the United States to take in Iraq.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2002, LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH REGARDING IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I, too, just returned from a month in my district, and spent a good deal of time traveling the district and talking with my constituents. I have a district that in fact voted in the majority for George Bush, and yet, I found, widely traveling my district, talking to di-

verse groups of constituents, a lot more questions than certainty about the President's position on Iraq. In fact, there is a great deal of misgiving in my district, as I believe there is abroad in the land.

The gentleman who preceded me made an eloquent case on a number of points, and I will not repeat those but I will emphasize a few others.

I am today sending a letter, along with 17 other Members of Congress, to the President. We are pleased that the President has now recognized the constitutional authority of the Congress to declare war and about the fact that he will come to Congress for approval for a war against Iraq.

At this point, I would venture and hope that Congress would not be willing to grant such approval to the President, given the lack of specificity and the many questions that need to be answered.

Among the questions that need to be answered are the following:

What is the threat posed by Saddam Hussein to the United States? UNSCOM said they destroyed 90 to 95 percent of their weapons of mass destruction. Is there convincing evidence of renewed production of chemical and biological weapons? Is there evidence that Iraq has successfully produced a nuclear weapon? Is there evidence Iraq has produced a reliable delivery system for weapons of mass destruction?

Are there new developments that mean Iraq poses an imminent threat to the United States, and therefore requires immediate attention? A year ago, the administration did not seem to think that. What has changed in that intervening time? If not, would a policy of enforcing no-fly zones, vigorous weapons inspections, military sanctions be effective in containing and/or reducing the perceived threat, given the success of such strategies over the last decade?

Is there any convincing evidence that Iraq planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, or harbored such organizations or persons? That would give some authority to act without a specific grant from Congress, but the administration has not made that case.

Is there convincing evidence that Iraq has shared its knowledge of biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons, or the weapons themselves, with other nations or terrorist organizations? How does the threat of Iraq doing so compare with the threat posed by Iran, Pakistan, China, North Korea, or a number of other nations that are known to possess weapons of mass destruction, some of whom are known to be sharing and selling such information?

How does the administration intend to assure Iraq does not become balkanized? This was the problem that was confronted by Colin Powell and the father of President Bush when they decided not to go to Baghdad, as they said at the time.